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ABSTRACT

This companion document describing roles and responsibilities of school-community support group members, five other companion documents, and an inservice guide comprise a series developed for assisting disabled persons in their transition from school to work. Consumers interested in this document include administrators, teachers, students, counselors, employers, employees, parents, spouses, and other community agency persons as appropriate to the individual needs of each handicapped person. Following an introduction, information is provided regarding basic functions of each person in various roles. Discussion first focuses on confidence building, field coordinator role, local coordination adjustment, and potential support team members. Next, responsibilities of these transition model team members are described: team leader; student; vocational education personnel; special education personnel; academic teacher(s); counseling personnel; parents, guardian, spouse; specialist(s) from community agencies; employer(s); peer(s); and union representatives. Descriptions of local steering committee member roles and of state advisory committee responsibilities in planning for and implementing of supportive services for handicapped persons are included. (YLB)

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Research and Development Series No. 257A

ED260237

EXTENDING HORIZONS:
ROLES OF SCHOOL-COMMUNITY SUPPORT GROUPS

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Margaretha Vreeburg

A document in the series

EXTENDING HORIZONS:

A RESOURCE FOR ASSISTING HANDICAPPED YOUTH IN THEIR TRANSITION FROM VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TO EMPLOYMENT

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CE 043 218

Extending Horizons: Roles of School-Community Support Groups provides a description of roles and responsibilities of school-community persons serving on support teams for handicapped individuals in their transition from education to work. Similarly, descriptions of local steering committee member roles and of state advisory committee rsponsibilities in planning for and implementing of supportive services for handicapped persons are included. Consumers interested in this document include administrators, teachers, students, counselors, employers, employees, parents, spouses, and other community agency persons as appropriate to the individual needs of each handicapped person. This document provides information regarding basic functions of each person in various roles.

INTRODUCTION

Although the transition from school to work can be very difficult for all students, it is especially difficult for those with handicaps. This document was prepared to assist persons who are involved in helping students find jobs and successfully remain employed.

Successful placement of qualified handicapped persons may require the provision of supportive services, modification of the work environment, and/or adaptation of materials and/or equipment. The purpose of providing special support, modification, or adaptation as needed is to enhance the opportunity for successful performance on the job by enabling the individual to be as independent as possible in working. It should be understood that there is no intent to lower the expectations of the job or work; rather, requirements for performance of the work are constant, regardless of who is doing the work.

By law, the school is required to provide free public education for all handicapped persons, ages 3 through 21, unless the state law does not provide free public education for certain ages of nonhandicapped persons. There is no law that holds any group or agency accountable for providing support for all handicapped persons while working. The need for supportive services does not necessarily end with education; therefore, this document addresses establishing early, at the time of schooling and continuing into employment, school-community support that will bridge the transition of the student from school to work.

For a smooth and successful transition from school to work, the handicapped individual must possess a number of essential qualities or characteristics. The individual should have the following:

- A realistic view or understanding of the job and its requirements
- The skills to meet the entry requirements of the job of his/her selection
- Transportation to and from the job site

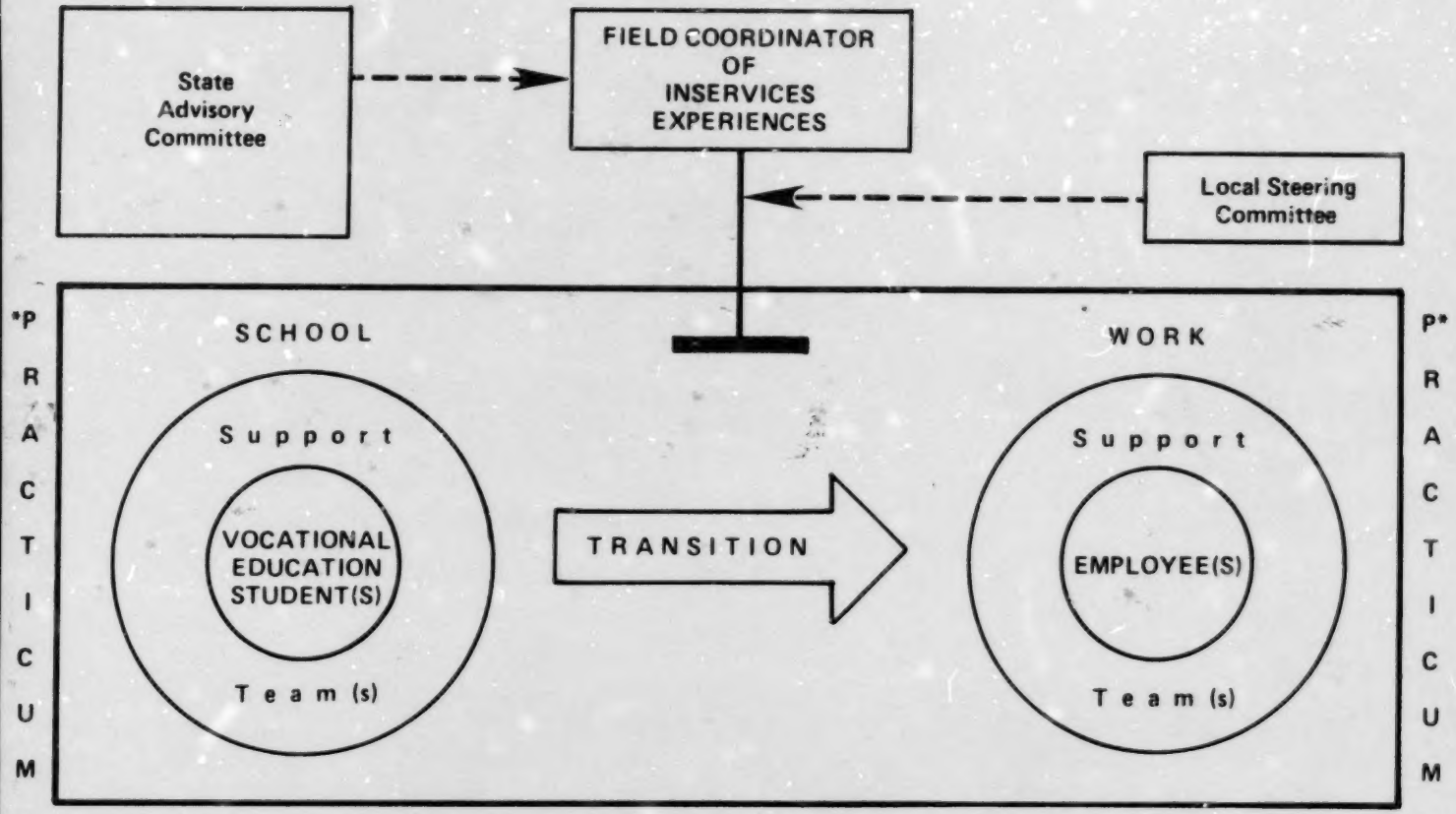
- The skills suited to the social environment of the job, and
- The opportunity to compete for the job

Above all else, the right match between the worker and the job is extremely important to success on the job and to opening doors for future advancement in the world of work.

Supplements of occupational information and know-how, the assistive devices, environmental modifications, and adaptations added to the qualities previously listed frequently are the ingredients leading to a successful and efficient transition from education to work for disabled persons. One way of assuring that the suggested supplements are in place is to prepare supportive school-community teams that include members who have expertise in determining the needs of the disabled student or worker and in directing that support to each individual. Prior to disabled students leaving the educational setting, support teams made up of members who have specializations in the areas of the needs of disabled persons in school and on the job should be formed. It is valuable to plan and prepare for future needs identified early and continue that support as necessary on the job.

If you would like to know more about the kinds of human resources available to assist in the all-important goal of helping youth in the transition from school to work, you will want to read this document, which presents a model planned, developed, and tested for just that purpose (see figure 1). Most situations are not ideal; however, people who care and are sincere in their responsibilities to young people seeking jobs will be motivated by these suggestions to acquire the resources that fit their school, community, and labor situations.

Involve as many people as possible. Make this support service a rewarding activity for all concerned. The transition from school to the world of work does not need to be frightening and upsetting. People do it everyday given the right kinds of support and assistance. This manual will give you the help and assistance you need.



*The practicum is herein defined as a mode of inservice delivery by which group work conferences or sessions and individualized support team conferences are intended to resolve real problems, issues, concerns, and needs confronting handicapped youth in their transition from vocational education to work.

Figure 1. Secondary/postsecondary transition model

TRANSITION MODEL RELATIONSHIPS

Confidence Building

As mature as many teenagers appear to be, many of their actions are to camouflage true fears and apprehensions. No matter how suave and confident a student may appear when discussing job possibilities, chances are, if one could analyze how the student feels, one would find a heart pumping fast and furiously, a tongue dry from nervous anticipation, and a racing pulse.

As a means for building student confidence to overcome such insecure feelings, it is recommended that this transition model (figure 1) be implemented 12 to 18 months or more prior to the student's completion of occupational preparation. At that time the students can be helped by school-community team members to realize that it is time to begin making specific plans for entering the work force and that he or she will profit greatly from this experienced assistance or support.

Potential team members representing a composite of varied areas of expertise from school and community (see figure 2) are sought to match the varied student needs existing beyond the occupational skill development. The transition model, therefore, is an inservice model for preparing the team support persons matched with each student to assist students in experiencing successful transitions from school to work.

The students are continuously the focal point of all inservice activities. Each support team can be made up of different types or numbers of persons because each student has different needs relative to support requirements. The directional arrows in figure 2 indicate that communication should flow two ways and that interactions occur among all team members, including the student supported.

Field Coordinator Role

The field coordinator has responsibility for coordinating the process of recruiting volunteer support team members, matching the expertise of team members with the needs of students, and planning and organizing inservice experiences including coordination of the scheduling of team meetings. Ideally, the coordinator can both enhance and facilitate the model process—by giving leadership to school-community persons who, in turn, are trained to support youth in the transition from vocational education programs to work. In addition, the coordinator acts as a liaison among all team leaders, support team participants, the students, other school personnel, and community persons.

Initially, students requiring supportive assistance are identified by teachers and counselors for the field coordinator. The field coordinator assists in acquiring additional members to serve on IEP (individualized education program) teams, assesses the needs of support persons to assist students, and plans varied inservice sessions to meet the needs of the total group.

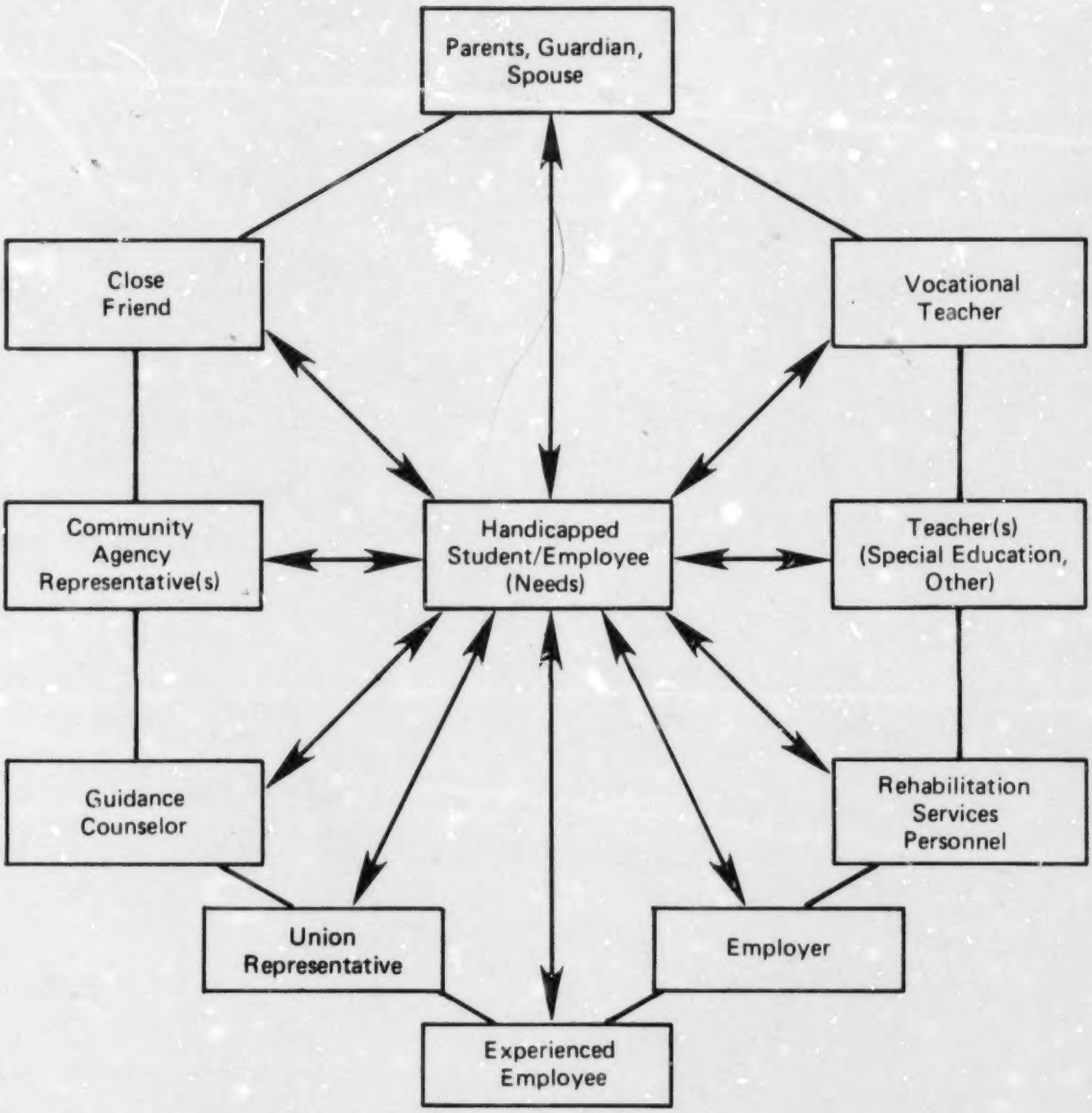


Figure 2. School-community support team relationships

The coordinator, therefore, plans, organizes, and schedules various inservice meetings for participants through varied preparation experiences (i.e., the large group sessions are planned to meet common needs of the groups; team meetings are conducted in which support-team persons provide assistance and counsel to the handicapped individual; and mini-workshops are designed to meet unique needs of some members of the teams).

The coordinator also makes available to students and teams information and resources for support and enrichment. Each support team follows up the inservice experiences with its student to ensure acquisition of a satisfactory level of skill based upon that student's potential capabilities. For example, to improve interview skills of students, the coordinator may set up a demonstration interview and critique of it to be observed and analyzed by participants. Interview guidelines for job applicants result from the participant analysis. Practice interviews utilizing the guidelines can then be scheduled for students and team members. Additional information and resources that the coordinator can provide include such activities and materials as the following:

- A filmstrip demonstrating model interview techniques
- A list of interview questions and appropriate responses
- A list of tips for appropriate dress and proper speaking skills for the interview
- Role play and analysis of the interview experience
- Guest speakers from the community to share expertise and develop skills among participants

The selection of inservice topics, therefore, is dependent upon the identified needs and interests of students and support persons such as parents, teachers, counselors, employers, and service agency representatives who are involved in the school-to-work transition experience.

Specific responsiblities of the field coordinator include the following:

- Identify students who need school-community support teams to enable students to make a successful transition from school to work.
- Plan collaboratively with school-community persons to meet needs of handicapped students and those needs of adults providing support to students.
- Orient all team members to the model and materials.
- Plan, coordinate, schedule, and implement inservice experiences for support teams and students.
- Coordinate and schedule planning of team leaders.
- Organize and supervise the collaboration of representatives of school, employment, rehabilitation, labor, and other community agencies.
- Facilitate communications among all participants.

The coordinator, therefore, has a key role in establishing a successful model at the local level. The field coordinator becomes the catalyst to promote the cooperative interaction of members of support teams for students.

Local Coordination Adjustments

The concept of the model is based on the premise that groups of service-oriented people enjoy working together to accomplish the goal of making the transition from school to work less traumatic and more productive for the handicapped students. In large school districts the task of developing a support service team may regularly fall to the guidance personnel who have time allotted to contacting out-of-school personnel. Rural and small schools may assign the responsibility for this activity to the vocational instructor who is teaching the skill subject area. Teaching a full schedule may prevent the instructor from making contacts with community and social agencies and business and industry. If this is the case, it may be necessary for the school district to grant permission for the teacher to set up files and to meet personnel from community social service and business agencies during the month before school begins.

A file, when properly etablished, permits the teacher to designate a mature student or to ask one of the office personnel to call individuals when the time for organizing a support team is at hand. Don't be surprised if your file includes service personnel that you rarely use. It is better to have too many rather than too few names of individuals willing to serve.

Potential Support Team Members

The primary objective of the transition model is to afford all students, and especially students with special needs, the opportunity to experience a successful transition from vocational education to the world of work. The student has a key role to play. Some students are mature enough to recognize that they are lacking in some areas and do need help. Others will not be aware of their needs and shortcomings. School personnel must emphasize the importance of planning realistic career goals. Again, remember that every team will be different, depending upon the needs of individual students or employees. Individual team members will be sought on the basis of their expertise that best matches the student needs identified. Individuals in the transition model for the school-community teams may serve from the perspective of one or more of the following:

- Team Leader
- Student
- Vocational Education Personnel
- Special Education Personnel
- Academic Teacher(s)
- Counseling Personnel
- Rehabilitation Personnel
- Parents, Guardian, Spouse

- Community Agency Personnel
- Employer(s)
- Peer(s)
- Union Representative(s)

Responsibilities of Transition Model Team Members

Each support team member has a very specialized role to play, each different but complementary to the roles of other team members. It is difficult to specifically state finite responsibilities. Just remember that team member responsibilities depend upon the identified needs of each student.

Team Leader

Effective involvement and commitment of the team leader is key to the success of the support team. The team leader should be closely involved with the student in order to supervise the student's transition from school to work. The position of team leader can rest with any of the personnel discussed in this document, provided that person designated can carry out the following responsibilities:

- Ensure that the student has the necessary support services available to make a smooth and successful transition from school to a job in order to maximize the student's potential.
- Ensure that the student has met graduation requirements.
- Identify additional personnel and resources that may assist the student.
- Determine the agenda, time, and place of team meetings.
- Conduct team meetings.
- Monitor the individualized education or employment program (IEP) process including completion and updating of the IEP.
- Assist the student in the job search process.
- Make the contacts at the job site to involve personnel from that site in the support team process.

As the student enters the employment setting, the team leadership may change from a representative of the school setting to a leader on the job site to a rehabilitation counselor, or to representatives from both school and job sites. A personnel manager, supervisor, or management representative may assume or share leadership responsibilities once the student has entered the job site.

It is important that the representative from the job site contact the field coordinator periodically to communicate any progress and/or problems that may occur. By handling problems immediately as they occur, smooth and successful transition will likely be enhanced.

Student

The student has a key role in the support team structure and can assume varying levels of responsibility depending on the sophistication of each individual student. First, the student must decide his or her career path and then closely work with the vocational instructor(s) and other school personnel to acquire the job-entry skills needed to enter the occupational area of his or her choice. The student must also determine, with the help of other support personnel, additional needs that should be met in order to make a smooth and successful transition from school to work. Such needs could range from assistance with transportation to job interviews to adaptive devices the student could use in order to complete effectively the job requirements. (Sample Student Needs Inventory, responses to which assist in identifying areas of interest and needs of the student, is found on the following pages.) Through an analysis of this needs inventory, the support team can determine the appropriate services needed to assist the student.

The student should assume responsibility for as many of the following tasks, as appropriate:

- Complete the Student Needs Inventory to determine the supportive services required to make a smooth and successful transition from school to work.
- Determine a career goal based on his or her interests, skills, and abilities.
- Select and invite appropriate team members to participate on the support team.
- Determine a realistic annual goal and to ask support team members for assistance, suggestions, and feedback when necessary.
- Schedule with approval of the team leader the time and place of team meetings, as appropriate.
- Notify members of the purpose, time, and place of the meeting, as appropriate.

The student should have a very close relationship with the team leader. The leader will help to guide the student through the transition from school to work and will monitor the progress and responsibilities of the student. *Any responsibilities the student cannot handle should be assumed by the team leader.*

Vocational Education Personnel

The vocational teacher is the expert within the student's vocational area of study and is familiar with the essential skills and abilities required for success in that particular career cluster. Therefore, the vocational educator has the primary role in guiding the student through the educational system and teaching the student the necessary job-entry skills to find employment.

In many situations, additional support personnel can assist the vocational instructor in reaching his or her goals of preparing students for work. For example, a counselor may be able to provide tutoring in the related math needed to acquire the necessary job-entry skills. Or a special

SAMPLE STUDENT NEEDS INVENTORY

Secondary Student ☐
Postsecondary Student ☐

I. In order to plan future inservice sessions that meet your needs, please complete the following by circling the amount or degree of interest that you have in the specific topics.

INTEREST				JOB SEARCH SKILLS
No	Little	Strong	Very Strong	Finding possible jobs and careers
No	Little	Strong	Very Strong	Finding what I like to do
No	Little	Strong	Very Strong	Locating and selecting a job
No	Little	Strong	Very Strong	Applying for a job
No	Little	Strong	Very Strong	Interviewing for a job
No	Little	Strong	Very Strong	Making decisions
No	Little	Strong	Very Strong	Surviving on the job

INTEREST				ADAPTING THE WORK SITE
No	Little	Strong	Very Strong	Changing the equipment and machines
No	Little	Strong	Very Strong	Changing the requirements of the job

INTEREST				INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS
No	Little	Strong	Very Strong	Managing personal and family finances (taxes, rent, budgets)
No	Little	Strong	Very Strong	Selecting, managing, and maintaining a home/apartment
No	Little	Strong	Very Strong	Caring for personal needs (dressing, grooming, health)
No	Little	Strong	Very Strong	Buying food and clothing
No	Little	Strong	Very Strong	Finding recreational activities
No	Little	Strong	Very Strong	Driving or finding transportation
No	Little	Strong	Very Strong	Getting around in the community

INTEREST				PERSONAL SOCIAL SKILLS
No	Little	Strong	Very Strong	Feeling good about myself
No	Little	Strong	Very Strong	Becoming responsible for my own behavior
No	Little	Strong	Very Strong	Being a good citizen – (taxes, etc.)
No	Little	Strong	Very Strong	Learning how to get along with others
No	Little	Strong	Very Strong	Learning how to solve problems
No	Little	Strong	Very Strong	Learning how to be independent

INTEREST				LEGISLATION
No	Little	Strong	Very Strong	Knowing my rights as a student
No	Little	Strong	Very Strong	Knowing my rights as an employee

INTEREST				FINANCIAL RESOURCES
No	Little	Strong	Very Strong	Getting money to finance my schooling
No	Little	Strong	Very Strong	Getting money to purchase special equipment
No	Little	Strong	Very Strong	Finding money to start my own business

SAMPLE STUDENT NEEDS INVENTORY—continued

II. Of all the interests which you have rated in I, list the four (4) which you feel are most important:

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

(4) _____

III. Please list any *other* topics about which you would like information:

(1) _____

(2) _____

IV. What kind of work do you want to do after you graduate?

(1) _____ (2) _____

Have you made any contacts with employers in these areas?

Yes____ No____

If *Yes*, please describe:

Employer **Address**

_____

V. Please list previous work experience (volunteer and/or paid).

Employer **Address** **Job Duties**

(1) _____

_____

_____

(2) _____

_____

_____

Your responses to these questions will be very helpful in planning with you throughout the year.

educator may be able to share some teaching methods that are especially effective with a particular student. An employer will be able to discuss what his or her present employee's needs are and the skills necessary to fill them. Through utilizing these additional sources of support, the vocational instructor can increase the likelihood of preparing a qualified, skilled worker for the employment force.

The specific responsibilities of vocational education personnel are as follows:

- Teach the job entry skills necessary to maximize to the fullest extent possible the future employment opportunities of the student.
- Utilize the appropriate teaching style to enhance the educational gains of the student.
- Identify the needs of the student and utilize the appropriate services and/or personnel required to meet these needs.
- Share possible job leads with the student.
- Recommend employers to participate on the support team as well as to provide honest feedback concerning the employability of the student.
- Work with the prospective employer and identify suitable positions, possible readjustments, etc., which may enhance the student's success on the job.
- Monitor the student's progress in the classroom as well as on the job.
- Assure that the support of the team extends into the work environment to provide as much assistance as necessary at the job site.

If a vocational instructor is unable to participate on a support team to the fullest extent needed to guarantee a smooth transition from school to work, then this responsibility can be assumed by the vocational supervisor or administrator. This person should be familiar with the specific course requirements, the expectations of the prospective employer that may hire the student, and the student's progress in the course.

Special Education Personnel

The involvement of the special educator on the support team is an essential resource for identifying and providing the supportive resources needed by the student. The special educator, the parent, guardian, and/or spouse undoubtedly are those supportive resource persons most knowledgeable about the nature of any dysfunctions and the capabilities of the handicapped individual.

Through the interaction of the special educator and the vocational educator in planning for the learning experiences of the student, the vocational educator will gain understanding about the capabilities of the student and the necessary supports or modifications to enable student performance to occur to the maximum potential. From this joint planning experience, the special educator also gains an increased understanding of the specific requirements of the job and/or occupational areas. The specific responsibilities of special education personnel are as follows:

- Share knowledge and insights concerning the capabilities of as well as the disabilities of the student.

- Share the learning styles, the teaching methods, and other suggested techniques that are effective instruments to utilize with the student in both the classroom and the employment site.

- Prepare the student with the appropriate job search skills needed for entry into the world of work.

- Provide job leads to the student.

- Share community resources which may be available to assist the student in making a successful transition to work.

- Provide leadership in the support team structure as necessary.

- Provide emotional support, encouragement, and advice to the student as necessary.

Through this cooperative agreement among support personnel, not only will the student's transition from the educational setting to the job site be enhanced, but the educators' insights, knowledge, and awareness will also grow and benefit other students as well.

Academic Teacher(s)

Some students develop a special rapport with teachers other than their vocational instructors. These relationships can be very rewarding and valuable to both the teacher and the student as well as to other persons involved on the support team.

By participating and sharing with personnel from special education and vocational education, academic teachers can exchange information and increase their understanding of the special intricacies involved in these two very distinct areas. Through building this cooperative relationship among school personnel, teachers can improve their effectiveness by sharing management styles, reinforcing key concepts and/or eliminating inappropriate student behaviors. Not only will students benefit by a more consistent and relevant educational program, but teachers will obtain an increased awareness of the overall goals of the educational system.

Some specific responsibilities with which this teacher can assist are listed below:

- Share insights about the student's strengths, weaknesses, and learning styles.

- Tutor and counsel the student when needed.

- Assist with the job search including interview practice and role playing.

- Provide encouragement to the student.

- Act as a reference for possible employers.

The possibilities for regular school personnel assisting students are endless and depend on the particular student's needs as well as the teacher's or other personnel's regular interests and time limitations. Possible types of regular school personnel who may be considered include, but are not limited to, those teaching in the following areas: reading, English, science, social studies, speech, mathematics, and physical education.

Counseling Personnel

School counselors provide immediate linkages with school resources as well as community resources relative to the identified needs of the student. Whether it be a need for career exploration, a tutor, or job placement activities, the counselor has a variety of tools that he or she can use to assist the student on a one-to-one basis. Whereas the teacher may not have the time to provide this one-to-one instruction and guidance, the counselor can take the time to individually work with the student. By using the career exploratory instruments available and/or the job contacts the counselor has personally made, the counselor can be instrumental in providing the support needed to link the student with the working world.

The specific responsibilities of the counselor include the following:

- Assist the student to research the specific career cluster of training and interests.
- Help the student match interests and skills with an appropriate job through use of the interest surveys, aptitude tests, and vocational assessment batteries available.
- Provide assistance with the necessary job search skills such as a resume and interview procedures.
- Provide appropriate job leads the student can pursue depending on the student's interests and skills.

Many times the counselor can work together with the vocational teacher or another concerned member of the support team to identify areas of need the student must meet in order to prepare for the transition from school to work. By identifying needs jointly, the counselor can then follow through on an individual basis with the appropriate support service needed to enhance the student's school-to-work transition.

Rehabilitation Personnel

It is extremely important that teachers, parents, guardians, spouses, and the handicapped individuals gain first-hand understanding of the resources available from rehabilitation services. The rehabilitation counselor is prepared to provide such information as needed.

On the other hand, rehabilitation counselors can gain first-hand knowledge of the educational and work expectations from school personnel and from employers through team planning and implementation of supportive services. Students benefit from increased understanding of their needs by the various experts on the support team.

Specific responsibilities of the rehabilitation specialists are as follows:

- Coordinate the individualized written rehabilitation plan (IWRP) with the individualized education program (IEP) developed by the IEP team.
- Share assessment information with the support team after the permission of the student has been obtained.
- Provide the appropriate services the student is eligible to receive.

- Provide job leads and resources to the student.

- Purchase equipment the student will require to become employable.

Through this cooperative agreement among school, rehabilitation and community agencies, not only can duplication of some services be avoided and reduced, but the delivery of services can be streamlined, therefore enhancing the experiences of the student.

Parents, Guardian, Spouse

Research points out and experience supports the fact that parents and guardians can supply invaluable information about handicapped students. Spouses are also included to be made aware of the total experiences of their partners. The inclusion of these family members is made on the recommendation of the student. At times a student wishing to establish his or her own independence would prefer not to have close relatives on his or her support team. The final decision about whom to include on the support team is made by the student.

The suggested responsibilities a parent, guardian, and/or spouse can assume to help the support team process are as follows:

- Provide transportation when needed.

- Provide feedback on necessary accommodations, learning styles, and reinforcement procedures utilized in the home that may be adapted in the school or on the job.

- Assist with many learning experiences through reinforcement of and consistency with team objectives that may be affected by out-of-school and outside-of-work experiences.

By having representatives from the family involved in the support team, support personnel can gain insights into family relationships that may be very important in assisting students and in understanding them as whole, social beings.

Specialist(s) from Community Agencies

Depending on the unique needs of the handicapped student, other supportive agency representatives should be included on the support team. Examples of such representation are as follows:

- The Epilepsy Association

- Crippled Children's Services

- United Cerebral Palsy

- Easter Seal society

- Physical therapists

- Occupational therapists
- Employment services

These specialists usually have a unique understanding, expertise, and knowledge of community, state, and national resources that may provide assistance in a particular student's transition from school to work. For example, a student with cerebral palsy may have benefited greatly from the advice and guidance of the director of occupational therapy.

Support from representatives of these specialized agencies can be targeted in a variety of ways, such as:

- Sharing information, knowledge and awareness of a specific individual's strengths and weaknesses
- Assisting with the identification of adaptive equipment that may be utilized
- Offering support, advice, and possible job leads to the student and the support team

Employer(s)

Employers are included on the support teams to provide feedback concerning the employability of the students. By knowing the standards employers have established in each particular career cluster to determine the readiness of the student to begin working, the support team can recommend the appropriate services, courses, or steps necessary to prepare the student for employment. The specific responsibilities of the employer are as follows:

- Provide feedback to the student and the support team on the employability of the student.
- Assist the student to improve job search skills, such as interviews through practice sessions and role playing.
- Explain and clarify the job duties of specific positions.
- Assist the support team with the types of reasonable accommodations and/or job restructuring that would be acceptable at the job site.
- Provide appropriate job leads to the student.
- Assist another employer to grow to understand the student's capabilities and weaknesses.
- Encourage the actual employer of the student to utilize the support team as a problem-solving vehicle.
- Provide awareness and sensitivity sessions to peer employees so the student is accepted into the job site with a positive attitude.

When the student enters the work world, it is especially helpful to the student and the support team for the employer to share or assume the leadership role within the support team. The involvement of personnel from the job site assures a smooth transition and enhances the success of the student.

Peer(s)

Many times students have a friend whom they wish to include on their support team. Some illustrations include the following:

- A friend from school who either has a similar handicap and/or is enrolled in the same class(es). Inclusion of the friend is especially beneficial to the student when peer tutoring or peer counseling situations are needed.

- A friend from the community with a similar handicap employed in a similar area of interest. The friend's inclusion is extremely beneficial to the student if this friend can help prepare the student for the transition to work. For example, a blind secretary can give a lot of tips to another blind student enrolled in secretarial science regarding (1) how to organize a filing system using Braille and (2) how to take phone messages.

Whether this friend provides emotional support or tips and ideas of ways to improve performance in school or on a job is not so important as the fact that having a friend on a support team helps to make a team meeting a pleasant, nonthreatening experience for the student.

Union Representative(s)

It is particularly helpful to include a union representative on the support teams of the students who need to join unions. This individual can explain to the support team the purpose of the union, the services provided by the union, and the requirements needed before joining the union. The team can work together to help the student be an aware and knowledgeable, prospective union member.

Once the student has joined the union, the union representative may decide to sponsor some awareness activities to prepare fellow workers for the new staff member. This will not only make the transition for the handicapped student smooth, it will also help increase the understanding other workers have concerning the employment of handicapped workers.

Extending the Model

In order to obtain the support of state and local leaders, you can form a state advisory committee and a local steering committee. These committee members are able to provide additional contacts to help the support team meet its goal.

State Advisory Committee

The state advisory committee is comprised of leaders at the state level who are involved in vocational education, special education, rehabilitation, and business and/or industry. These individuals will know of possible resources in the community that may indirectly assist support persons to meet the needs of handicapped individuals. The field coordinator, acting as the liaison between support teams and the committee, can meet with the committee as often as needed to share information and resources.

The state advisory committee can also inform the field coordinator of statewide trends and issues that the field coordinator needs to know. The field coordinator may share policy or legislative trends with the supportive team through the inservice experiences. If support personnel have specific concerns or requests that the state committee may be able to answer, the support personnel should discuss the matter with the field coordinator, who can then contact the state committee.

Local Steering Committee

The local steering committee can also be a valuable resource to support team members. The committee helps the field coordinator select timely inservice topics, and assists the specific teams in meeting their goals and objectives. Some specific functions the local steering committee performs are as follows:

- Provide community and occupational information helpful in arranging for student placements.
- Assist in identification of employers who will serve on support teams.
- Advise students and other support personnel on procedures and techniques available.
- Advise the field coordinator on topics and presenters who could provide relevant topics for support personnel.

CONCLUSION

Now that you are familiar with the entire scope of this transition model, you select and choose the support components needed to meet the needs of the students in your community. Whether students require the assistance of any or all of the support team members described is a decision you must make. A teacher, a parent, or a counselor may pull together the support services needed to assist one student through this challenging period of time. A school administrator may decide to adopt the transition model in its entirety. The overall goal of this model, therefore, is to provide the necessary supportive services needed to assist all students make a smooth and successful transition from school to work.

Regardless of the kinds of barriers that exist for students in their transition from school to work, the goal of support personnel is to eliminate barriers through appropriate supportive services. Whether providing supportive services means obtaining adaptive devices such as hearing aids, arm braces, key guards for typewriters—or whether it means working with students to perfect their skills of neatly filling out job applications and practicing interview techniques—the extent of the support is determined by a support team and then implemented.

This model was planned, developed, and tested to provide school and community organizations with an option in their attempt to meet the unique needs of any or all student(s) about to enter the working world. The transition model offers suggestions and procedures to prepare school and community persons who work with the student and who are ultimately responsible for preparing the student for life as an adult, a worker, and a contributing member of society.

Through this model you can participate in the process that provides the support and services needed to ensure students a smooth and successful transition from school to work. Through this model school personnel can gain the necessary knowledge, skills, and awareness needed to prepare students for the work force. Through this model, employers can become aware of the special needs of and considerations for special populations. They can also learn how to incorporate effectively these students into the work force as productive and competent workers.

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